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SOME HISTORIC STREETS AND COLONIAL
HOUSES OF SALEM.

BY GILBERT L. STREETER.

[FROM THE HISTORICAL COLLECTIONS OF THE ESSEX INSTITUTE,
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MILES WARD AND JACOB CROWNINSHIELD HOUSE.

— CABOT AND JUDGE ENDICOTT HOUSE.

SOME HISTORIC STREETS AND COLONIAL HOUSES OF SALEM.

BY GILBERT L. STREETER.

[*A paper read before the Essex Institute, February 19, 1900.*¹]

I SHOULD not venture to inflict upon the patient listeners of the Essex Institute these remarks upon "Some Historic Streets and Colonial Houses of Salem," were I not emboldened thereto by a similar treatment of some of the old streets of Boston, by the Rev. Edward Everett Hale, in his entertaining little book entitled, "Historic Boston." Surely, I said to myself, if Boston, in her street nomenclature, has made historic names familiar, by thus honoring distinguished persons associated with her earlier days, Salem has done the same, and may likewise recount the story. This is my excuse for the following paper.

In Salem, as well as elsewhere, in the earliest days, houses were built before roads were constructed, and therefore some mention of the ancient habitations may properly be made before we arrive at the public ways. We have now remaining in our streets at least four different styles of architecture, which prevailed in former

¹The usual discussion which followed the reading of this paper showed a wide divergence in the views entertained of the Turner House. See page 206.

periods of our history, leaving out of view the numerous modern caprices of house-building, which exist in almost endless and most eccentric variations.

The first house in Salem, as we are assured by Mr. W. P. Upham, was built by Roger Conant — that sturdy first-comer to this territory — and it was upon Essex street, nearly opposite Derby Square, or the Market place. We may assume, in the absence of information, that it was a log-house, with a low roof, covered with thatch, which was the character of many of the structures in this and the other settlements, for several years. But it may have been a house made of hewn plank — possibly brought here from Cape Ann — like "the faire house," with a hewn oak frame, brought here subsequently, for Governor Endecott. As there was then no way of preparing timber except by hand, the axe was usually used in place of the saw, and we meet frequent references in the early records to hewed timbers and hewed planks. The former we frequently see now in ancient houses.

Governor Dudley, in 1631, wrote in condemnation of thatched roofs and catted chimneys, because they frequently took fire, and he prohibited their use "in our new town, intended this somer to be builded." A catted chimney was one built up to the roof with brick, or stone, and above with slabs of wood covered inside with clay. Dudley also alludes to "English Wigwams," covered "with thatch or boughs," as equally dangerous, which seems to show that some settlers lived in Indian wigwams.

Governor Winthrop, in 1646, wrote a letter describing a tempest, "than which [he says] I never observed a greater," and mentions that the roof of "Lady Moody's house at Salem" was blown off and carried six or eight rods, and he adds that "ten persons lay under it, and knew not of it until they awoke in the morning." This astonishing incident is suggestive of a previous evening of unusual festivity followed by a night of extraordinary somnolence. Mr. Upham says, in his admirable history of witchcraft, that "nothing strikes us more, as strange and unaccountable, than the small size of houses in those days." Lady Deborah Moody's house had a flat roof, was

of one story, and nine feet in height! Yet she was a lady of quality and of high position, a connection of Sir Henry Vane, and a woman of property. Governor Winthrop calls her a "wise and anciently religious woman." But she became tainted with the heresy about infant baptism, and was driven out of the colony to Long Island at an early day.

Mr. Upham says, "it seems very strange that such a lady had a house only nine feet high. The early houses were built either as temporary structures, or with a view to enlargement. They were low studded for warmth. The houses generally were designed to be increased in length, when convenience required. The chimney was very large, placed at one end, and so constructed that on the extension of the building, fireplaces could be opened into it on the other end. A building of twenty feet was prepared to become one of forty feet in width, or length, as the case might be, and then the chimney would be in the middle of it."

The Pickering house, on Broad street, was built in this way. The eastern half was built, in 1651, with a big chimney on the western end. Ten years afterwards it was enlarged by building the western half, around the other side of the chimney, and finally a lean-to was built on the northern side. This ancient homestead, by the way, is one of the most interesting houses in New England, not only because of its antiquity and its quaint architecture, but for the reason that the ancient family of Pickering have occupied it from the beginning until now, through eight generations, a period of 250 years, and have always, in all these generations, occupied useful and honorable, and in some instances, distinguished positions in society.

Mr. Felt, the annalist, states that by computation it appeared that 459 dwellings, "mostly huts and cottages," were erected from the first settlement until the close of 1660. Of these, 226 were built prior to 1638. In 1629 there were "11 houses, besides cottages." William Winter, in his charming volume entitled "Shakespeare's England," says, "the one story cottage, with attic windows, was the almost invariable fashion of building in English

country towns till the 17th century." This fashion was brought to New England, as numerous specimens yet to be seen assure us.

The wealthier people soon began to build larger and more substantial dwellings, with heavy oak frames, and two stories in height. In these the chimneys were features of leading importance. These were usually of huge dimensions, with fireplaces often eight and ten feet in the clear, so as to receive immense fore-logs and back-logs for the fire. Several of these enormous chimneys can still be seen in Salem, as in the Ward house on St. Peter street, the Pickering house on Broad street, and in the "House of the Seven Gables."

The "fire room," as the kitchen, or living room, was often called, was the most cheery room in the house, the largest, most comfortable, most useful, and most frequented.

We, whose homes are pervaded by a gentle warmth thrown out from an unseen source in the basement, and whose evenings are passed in the glare of electricity, cannot realize the great importance of the chimney and the radiant fireplace in the homes of our ancestors. The extreme cold of our New England winter was the great dread and the worst foe of the first settlers. Hence the huge chimney, which, when once warmed through, softened the temperature of the whole house, and admitted of an ample fireplace in every room. Around the great glowing fire in an old New England kitchen centered all of homeliness and comfort that could be found in a New England home. As a winter evening came on, the great fireplace — often nearly as wide as one side of the room — with benches in the jambs on which two or three could comfortably sit, was prepared for the night. A huge log, perhaps six feet in length, and so large that handspikes were used to handle it, was put in as a "back log;" a smaller one, as "back stick" placed over it; the great andirons duly adjusted, and the remaining wood piled deftly upon them. Then, soon the whole fabric broke into a roaring fire, brilliant, warming, enlivening and exhilarating. Whittier describes the scene in his poem entitled "Snow Bound:"

The first part of the history of the United States is the history of the colonies. The colonies were founded by Englishmen who had come to America in search of a new home. They were at first dependent on England for everything they needed, but as they grew in number and power, they began to assert their independence. They fought the Revolutionary War and won, and in 1776 they declared their independence from England. The second part of the history of the United States is the history of the Union. The Union was formed in 1787, and since that time it has been a source of strength and unity to the people of the United States. The third part of the history of the United States is the history of the present. The present is a time of great progress and achievement, and it is a time when the people of the United States are working together to build a better future for themselves and for the world.



JOHN WARD HOUSE. Showing Overhanging Second Story and Corner Shop.
 NARBONNE HOUSE, Showing Lean-to Roof and Corner Shop.

"We piled, with care, our nightly stack
Of wood against the chimney-back, —
The oaken log, green, huge, and thick,
And on its top the stout back-stick;
The knotty forestick laid apart,
And filled between with curious art
The ragged brush; then, hovering near,
We watched the first red blaze appear,
Heard the sharp crackle, caught the gleam
On whitewashed wall and sagging beam,
Until the old, rude-furnished room
Burst, flower-like, into rosy bloom;"

These second-period houses at first were two stories high in front, with a peaked roof that sloped down nearly to the ground in the back over an ell covering the kitchen, in the shape known as a "lean-to" or, as it was called by the country folks, the "linter." There are several fine specimens of this early style of dwellings within the original limits of Salem, but none in the city proper. The Narbonne house, on Essex street, is merely suggestive of the true type. These houses almost always, if not quite, front to the south.

Other substantial houses, with heavy oak frames, were built with the second story overhanging the first by a foot or two, and the attic story projecting beyond the second. These houses were usually lined with bricks, set upon edge, between the studding, which made them warmer, and afforded protection against hostile bullets. In the frontier towns these were known as "Garrison Houses," and, when Indian raids occurred, the inhabitants fled to these "Garrison Houses" for safety, and they hardly ever failed to afford protection. It is fortunate that the pictures of a large number of these "Garrison Houses," in various towns of New England, are preserved in Mr. Drake's excellent book on the Indian wars.

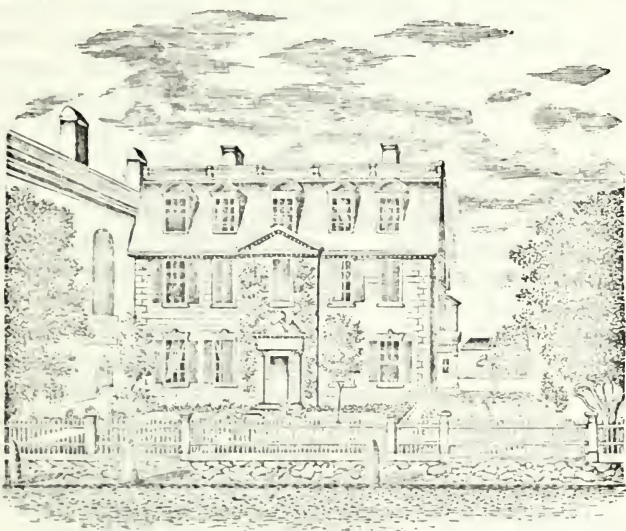
In their best form these houses, with overhanging stories, and gables on the roofs, and diamond-shaped glass in the windows, were elegant affairs, and it is a pity that no specimen of them has been preserved in Salem. The Pickering house, on Broad street, and the Curwen house, on Essex street, only remind us of what these mansions were.

In the rooms of the Essex Institute are accurate pictures

of several of these unique and interesting structures, such as the Governor Bradstreet mansion, the old English house, the Witch house, so called, and others. Sometimes the exteriors of these houses were covered with a coarse mortar, or daub, in which various ornamental figures were outlined, and bits of glass were strewn to make a glittering appearance. A specimen of this sort of work, "rough cast," so called, taken from the old Sun Tavern, can be seen at the Institute rooms, and a few exterior walls thus made remain in the older parts of the city.

Many people have wondered why they built houses in this odd way — one story projecting over another — and the most absurd reasons have been given, such as, that it served for purposes of defence against the Indians, the projections affording chances for loop-holes, through which missiles could be dropped upon the enemy. The simple fact appears to be that they were the fashion in those days. The style was quite common in the north of Europe and especially in Holland, and in the narrow streets of the Dutch towns the projections above the sidewalk afforded much needed floor room in the interior of abutting buildings. The Pilgrims brought this method of building over with them, and a generation or more ago such houses were not uncommon in the old towns of New England.

The most characteristic of these mansions were well described by Hawthorne in his account of "the House of Seven Gables." "The best and stateliest architecture of a long past epoch," an "imposing edifice among the habitations of mankind." "The seven acutely peaked gables faced towards several points of the compass, and a huge clustered chimney was in the midst. Its whole exterior was ornamented with quaint figures, conceived in the grotesqueness of a gothic fancy, and drawn or stamped in the glittering plaster composed of lime, pebbles, and bits of glass, with which the wood-work of the walls was overspread. On every side the gables pointed sharply towards the sky, and presented the aspect of a whole sisterhood of edifices, breathing through the spiracles of one great chimney. The many lattices, with their small diamond-shaped panes, admitted the sunlight into hall and chamber,



PICKMAN HOUSE, ESSEX STREET.

while, nevertheless, the second story, projecting far over the base, and itself retiring beneath the third, threw a shadow and thoughtful gloom into the lower rooms. Carved globes of wood were affixed under the jutting stories. Little spiral rods of iron beautified each of the seven peaks.

The principal entrance, which had almost the breadth of a church door, was in the angle between the two front gables, and was covered by an open porch, with benches beneath its shelter. Under this arched doorway, scraping their feet on the well-worn threshold, now trod the clergymen, the elders, the magistrates, the deacons, and whatever there was of aristocracy in town or country. Thither, too, thronged the plebeian classes, as freely as their betters and in larger numbers. Just within the entrance, however, stood two serving men, pointing some of the guests to the neighborhood of the kitchen, and ushering others into the statelier rooms — hospitable alike to all, but still with a scrutinizing regard to the high or low degree of each. Velvet garments, sombre but rich, stiffly plaited ruffs and bands, embroidered gloves, venerable beards, the mien and countenance of authority, made it easy to distinguish the gentleman of worship, at that period, from the tradesman, with his plodding air, or the laborer in his leather jerkin, stealing awe-stricken into the house which he had perhaps helped to build."

These celebrated mansions were such as those described by Longfellow:

"Built in the old Colonial Days.
When men lived in a grander way,
With ampler hospitality."

The styles of domestic architecture thus far described prevailed until about 1740, when a more pretentious fashion was introduced, called the Mansard. This was designed by a distinguished French architect, Charles Mansard, who flourished over a century before. This style embraced the gambrel roof, the projecting attic windows, and certain external ornaments. This type was then a hundred years old in Europe, and it is still popular, both there and here. The Pickman house, on Essex street, opposite St. Peter, was, I think, the first of the

Mansards in Salem. Then came the Cabot house (now Mr. Low's) and the Andrews house, and many others, more or less in that fashion. The gambrel roof still retains its popularity and is frequently used in modern structures.

One of the best instances of this fashion of dwelling house is the "Pineapple House," so called, in Brown street court. It formerly stood on Brown street. The frame of this house, says Mrs. Cooke, in her excellent history of the Driver Family, was brought from England by Captain Thomas Poynton, in one of his own ships, as early as 1740. The wooden pineapple was also brought from England at the same time with the frame, and placed directly over the front door. It is so tall that it reaches nearly to the middle of the sash of a window in the second story of the house, directly over the front door; hence the blinds to this window are cut to accommodate the pineapple, which still remains in its original position. It was highly gilded in the time of Mrs. Poynton (known to all of the family as "Aunt Poynton"), for every year she had it re-gilt to equal in brightness the huge brass knocker, in the form of the head of a lion, which now, unfortunately, has disappeared. The significance of this pineapple has never been stated.

Captain Poynton was a loyalist when the Revolution came on, and fled to England, where he died, in 1791. A tradition in the family relates that his house was visited by a turbulent mob of patriots, to obtain a recantation of his obnoxious political sentiments, but he obstinately refused and the patriots withdrew.

After the Mansard style of houses came the large square houses, three stories in height, which prevailed in the second commercial era of Salem. Some were of wood and some of brick, and all were spacious and substantial. They are distinctly identified with the time of our greatest maritime enterprise. Many of them are grand and elegant. They were built by the old East India merchants, many of them, and they very plainly mark a period of wealth and prosperity. An admirable specimen of these stately mansions is the Johonnot house, on Federal street, built by Jerathmel Peirce.

Now, having dwelt too long upon the houses, and



THE JEHONNOT HOUSE.

PAVED COURT-YARD OF JEHONNOT HOUSE.

having mentioned the different styles built by our ancestors, let us look up and down some of the ancient streets.

ESSEX STREET.

The name Essex is of historical interest in England as well as here. The County of that name in England was a stronghold of Puritanism, and many of our early colonists came from there. It stood by the Parliament as against the King, and the Earl of Essex fought its battles. In this colony, as early as 1640, a group of eight "plantations" was made a judicial district, called "Essex Shire." By and by came the County of Essex, and then the town of Essex. And the name is now borne by numerous associations and several localities. There is a well-known street called Essex in Boston.

Before the Revolution there was a street called Essex in Salem, but it was not the present one. It was that part of the present Washington street lying west of the railroad, between the street railway office and Norman street.

At that time our main street bore several names in different parts. Next to Washington street it was the oldest highway in town, running from the Meeting House to the Neck. Different sections of it were originally on the highest part of a sandy ridge which ran most of the way from one end of the town to the other. Hence it was crooked, as it is to-day, and the lower part of it, from the Franklin building to Collins Cove, was called Bow street, on account of its shape. From the Franklin building to Washington street it was King street. The next section, to North street was Queen street. The remainder, from North street to Boston street, was Middle street.

From an early period, down say to 1700, the road between Washington and North streets, was a mere narrow cart track, probably private property and was called Batter's Lane, from one Edmond Batter who lived on the northwest corner of Essex and Washington streets, and owned several acres between the lane and the North River. This lane ran through a great swamp, which reached from Federal street across to near the Barton Square Church.

The swamp drained into the Cove on Washington street, and a part of the ditch was visible within a few years, behind the post-office building.

Just before the Revolution this part of the street through the swamp, got into such bad condition that it was nearly impassable in rainy weather. It should be borne in mind that at that time, and for many years afterwards, there were no sidewalks anywhere, and people walked in the middle of the road. In 1773, Queen street was paved with cobble stones, brought from Baker's Island, for the reason, as stated, that "many of the market productions which go to Marblehead in a wet season would come to Salem if this street were in a good condition." After this, Queen street became Old Paved street, and from being the poorest way in town became the best. But royal names were getting unpopular about this time, and after the Revolution the street names were re-adjusted, and the main street was called Essex street, from one end to the other.

This part of Essex street, between Washington and North, is very narrow, and yet Mr. Sidney Perley states that it has been widened twice at the upper end, once twelve feet and again six feet, showing that it was at first a mere cart track to adjoining fields.

FEDERAL STREET.

In the Rev. Edward Everett Hale's account of the streets of Boston I find the following unhistorical paragraph: "Salem and Essex County were loyal supporters of the Constitution and of the Federal party. They gave the name of Federal Street to one of the important streets in the city of Salem. In that street also there is a Federal Street Church, and the tune of Federal Street, now well known, was written by the late General Oliver, who was the chorister of that church, while the minister was preaching one Sunday afternoon."

This is quite wrong. Dr. Hale apparently thinks that Federal street was named in commemoration of the adoption of the Federal Constitution, but this is not so. It was so named many years before the Revolutionary War.

Then, there is no church bearing the name of "Federal Street Church" in our city. The First Baptist Church is on that street, but when this was built that part of the street was called Marlborough street. But General Oliver was never chorister of the Baptist Church, but served in that capacity in the North Church, on Essex street.

The name Federal street originated in this way:—From the early days of the settlement there had been a public way, eight feet wide, along the southern bank of the North River from the upper part of the town to the lower, but in some way this river path was closed, which caused dissatisfaction and contention. After several years of dispute a compromise was made, in 1766, and a new road was laid out through the lots between Main street and the North River, and called "Federal street." This name appears to have been selected in commemoration of the harmony which had been arrived at in constructing the new road. The word "federal" was in more familiar use then than now, and conveyed a somewhat different meaning. But this was twenty years before the Federal Constitution.

Dr. Hale is right however, in the suggestion that the names of Salem streets have political significance and recall the days of Federal supremacy. The Federal names of Hamilton, Pickering, Monroe, will at once be recalled, while at the same time not a single Republican name was then used for this purpose. The names of Bentley, Adams and Jefferson, are of very recent application.

GEDNEY COURT.

This is a very ancient way, leading down to the shore of a considerable cove of the South River, "Sweet's Cove," now no longer traceable, but of which Mr. Perley has recently published an excellent outline, in his very interesting magazine, "The Essex Antiquarian," for February. Here was the busy centre of the ship-building industry, for many years, and near by were wharves and warehouses of the merchants, and, for a long period, the Custom House. Mr. Perley shows that in the year 1700, there were five wharves upon this cove, west of the pres-

ent line of Mill street. The yards of the ship-builders, and the shops of the nail-makers, the chain-makers, the forgers of anchors, the rope and sail-makers, were around this cove. Here was "Ruck's Village," often referred to in our local records. From the constant clatter of the shipwrights' hammers, the neighborhood received the name of "Knocker's Hole," a nickname preserved to our own day.

Elderly people remember seeing in their youth, at the foot of Gedney Court, an ancient house, large, black and time-worn, which, it is said, was used as a Custom House for thirty-four years. Subsequently it acquired the name of the "old French House," because it had been occupied for a time by a colony of French exiles from Acadia. This house, in the early days, had been the property of the Gedneys, a large and distinguished family in this town. The name of the Court helps to preserve their memory. Few families have been so favorably identified with the early history of Salem.

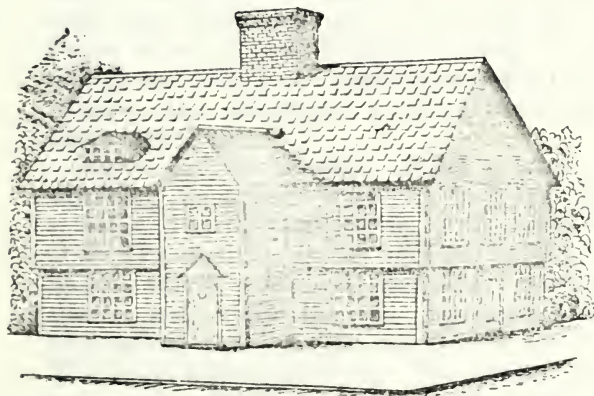
The most eminent of several brothers was, undoubtedly, Bartholomew Gedney, styled Colonel and Honorable, born in Salem, in 1640, died in 1698. He was a physician by profession, but soon became very leading in all the affairs of the Colony. He held many offices in civil life, in the militia, in the colonial administration, and in the Courts. He was Colonel of the Essex Regiment, and active in several campaigns against the French and the Indians. He was a Deputy to the General Court, and a member of the Council under Governor Andros, by which he lost, for a time, the confidence of his townsmen. As a magistrate he was equally conspicuous, Judge of Probate, Chief Justice of the Common Pleas, and unfortunately, one of the Justices appointed to try the witches, in which capacity he was quite as infamous as his associates.

He was doubtless one of the most distinguished persons in the Colony. Mr. Goodell refers to him as "preeminent among the illustrious of his countrymen." His tomb is in the Charter Street Burial Ground—the oldest and most interesting burial ground in New England—and it is of brick and freestone, directly in front of the

entrance. Mr. Upham says, the "Honorable Colonel Bartholomew Gedney lived near the northwest corner of High and Summer Streets."

SEWALL STREET.

Among the most prominent and respectable gentlemen in Salem two hundred years ago was Major Stephen Sewall. He belonged to the class of people described by Governor Hutchinson as persons "of figure and estate." He was a fine specimen of the best type of the Puritan citizen. His portrait is in possession of Mr. George R. Curwen,¹ a descendant, and shows a rather portly and



STEPHEN SEWALL HOUSE.

dignified person, of a full habit, and gracious aspect. His grey hair hangs in handsome curls upon his shoulders, and a skull cap, of black velvet, crowns his head. He lived in a solid and substantial house on the western corner of Sewall and Essex streets, an unpainted house, with porch, gables, and overhanging second story, — but Sewall street was not then laid out, and Essex street was hardly more than a cart track to the neighboring fields.

Major Sewall was eminent as a merchant, a soldier and a magistrate. He owned several vessels, engaged, doubtless, in the trade with the West Indies, and "Sewall's

¹ This is disputed and it is claimed that the portrait is that of Judge Samuel Sewall.

Wharf" was his place of business. He was very active in the militia, and it is related of him that on one occasion he and Captain John Turner, — also a distinguished and wealthy citizen of Salem, — joined in a small naval expedition, and captured a gang of pirates at the Isles of Shoals, and brought them to Salem, whence he marched them under guard to Boston, where six of them were hanged. Piracy was not uncommon in those days, and it is said that some prominent people in society occasionally "turned an honest penny" by being privy to these enterprises.

Major Sewall was a brother of Judge Samuel Sewall of Boston, the author of the celebrated diary, which portrays so minutely the social life of the Puritans of those days, and which has gained for him the title of "the Pepys of early New England history." Judge Samuel Sewall was one of the magistrates who tried the alleged witches, and afterwards publicly bewailed his folly on those occasions.

Major Stephen Sewall owned a large tract of land adjoining his house, extending back as far as Federal street, and partly touching on North street. In the middle of this lot was the highest land in the then settled part of Salem, where a disused Methodist meeting-house now stands, and where the old Aqueduct Company had a distributing reservoir to supply the town with water. This is an historical spot. The earliest settlers of the town built a fort here, for defence against the Indians. This elevation commanded the only land approach to the settlement, which was down around the coves.

This fortification was called the block house, or guard house. It was built upon this high land on what was called in those days the "Arbour Lot." This land of Sewall was sold in 1752 to Judge Lynde, who laid out Lynde street, and sold a lot of land there to Captain James Barr, who built a house on it, which is now occupied by one of his descendants, Mr. George R. Curwen. In the deed to Barr, Judge Lynde says that the land is "part of the Arbor Lot on which the first fort in Salem was built, more than 120 years ago." This would seem to determine the antiquity of the fort. And this ancient

blockhouse, Mr. Felt says, was sometimes used by the Court of Assistants when they met to transact the business of the little colony.

Now it is an interesting fact that, within the present century, remains of this old guard house were discovered, just north of the meeting-house. In digging they came across the foundations of a chimney, containing a fireplace and oven, in good order, with a brick hearth, built of English bricks. The hearth was four feet below the original surface, in accordance with the custom of the first settlers, who built their houses low and partly under ground, for warmth. In Major Sewall's day he had a round latticed arbor, or summer-house, built on the site of the old fort.

Major Sewall was also a Register of Probate and Clerk of Courts for many years, and always held in high esteem. He seems to have lived in the best style of those days, and entertained very generously. In 1686, one John Dunton, walked down to Salem from Boston, to make a few calls, and stopped at the Major's house. He wrote to his wife saying, "the entertainment he gave me was truly noble and generous, and my lodgings so extraordinary, both with respect to the largeness of the room and richness of the furniture that might have entertained a King. So free he was that had I stayed a month there I should have been welcomed gratis. He lives an example to the people; he is the mirror of hospitality; and neither Abraham nor Lot were ever more kind to strangers." So much for the Major's hospitality.

Judge Sewall's diary contains numerous references to his visits at the Major's house in Salem, and perhaps the most interesting is his account of a wedding here, which he attended in 1713. The occasion was the marriage of Mr. Aaron Porter and Mrs. Susan Sewall, and the services were performed by the Rev. Mr. Noyes and himself. There were many young gentlemen and gentlewomen present, and among the elderly people the Judge names Mr. Hirst and wife, Mr. Blower, Mr. Prescott, Mr. Tufts, senior and junior, Mesdames Leverett, Foxcroft, Goff, and Kitchen—a select company of those days. After the ceremony the Rev. Mr. Noyes made a prayer; and then he made a speech, in which he said that, "Love was

the sugar to sweeten every condition in the married relation." The company then partook of sack-possit and cake. Sack-possit was a favorite tippie, made of ale, and sack, or wine, thickened with eggs and cream, seasoned with spices and sugar, and boiled for some hours, and it was extolled as a "very pretty drink" for festive occasions.

After the sack-possit the Judge led off in singing five verses of the 45th Psalm, which, he says, "I set to Windsor Tune," and adds, "I had a very good Turkey-Leather Psalm Book which I gave to the bridegroom saying, I give you this Psalm Book in order to your perpetuating this song; and I would have you pray that it may be an introduction to our singing with the choir above."

The first verse thus sung, on this not over-lively occasion, reads as follows: "All thy garments smell of myrrh, and aloes, and cassia, out of the ivory palaces, whereby they have made thee glad."

Major Stephen Sewall died Oct. 25, 1725, and was buried with unusual pomp. Gloves were furnished in profusion for the clergy and the mourners, the bells of the town were tolled, a salute was fired by the great guns brought up from the fort for the purpose, and "generous libations of rum and wine were poured to his memory." The body was buried in Broad Street Cemetery, but there is no monument. A picture of his mansion can be found in the Essex Antiquarian for November 1899.

ENGLISH STREET.

This avenue, formerly English's Lane, is not only one of the oldest of our public ways, but is associated with one of the most brilliant periods in our local history, now so remote in time that we only dimly discern its outlines. Some persons, now living, remember an ancient colonial mansion, blackened by age, abandoned and neglected for many years, which stood on the eastern corner of English and Essex streets. This was known as the "Old English House," and a picture of it is preserved in the Institute. Here was the home, more than two hundred years ago, of Salem's great merchant, Philip English, and of Mary

Hollingsworth, his wife, and here they lived in the rude style of elegance and luxury usual in those days. For they had neither paint nor paper on their walls, nor carpets on their floors, nor china on their tables, but were content with pewter trenchers and wooden platters; their house was but half warmed and dimly lighted, and they lacked very many of the household conveniences which are now thought essential.

Dr. Bentley says of this old house that "it had rich and numerous ornaments in the highly gothic style." In Cheever's notes on the life of Philip English, which I mainly follow, it is stated that, it was one of those ancient mansion houses for which Salem was once noted, a venerable, many-gabled, solid structure, with proec n stories and porches. It was taken down in 1833, as it had become dangerous, and there was found a secret room¹ in the garret, supposed to have been built after the witchcraft furor as a temporary resort in case of a second outcry.

The picture in the Institute shows a little shop in the corner of the building, on Essex street. This may have been Mr. English's store, or, quite as likely, it was a variety shop kept by his wife. For, as Mr. Upham relates, "instances were not uncommon from an early period in this part of the country for matrons of the most respectable families to conduct a business in little shops in the front room of houses. There were many such in Salem, and they contributed largely to the thrift and prosperity of particular families." A few years since there were several of these house-shops remaining, with their wooden shutters put up for the last time years ago, but I recall only one now, that in the Narbonne house, on Essex street.

Philip English arrived in Salem some time before 1670, a poor, friendless, run-away youth, from the Isle of Jersey. He seems to have been taken in, as an act of compassion, by Mrs. Elinor Hollingsworth, then the hostess of the famous "Blue-Anchor Tavern," not far from the junction of English and Derby streets. She employed

¹ Other ancient buildings contained secret apartments the real use of which is unknown.

him for several years, and, by and by, he married her daughter Mary, and was in command of a vessel trading in fish to his native Isle of Jersey. Then he was a merchant, and on the highway to success. He soon became rich. About 1690 he had twenty-one vessels at one time at home and in foreign ports. He had a wharf and warehouses at Point of Rocks, and owned fourteen dwellings, besides his own mansion. Some of these dwellings were at Point of Rocks.

There were other large merchants in town at the same time, among them, Col. John Turner, Benjamin Marston, James Lindall, Timothy Lindall, Thomas Plaisted, John Higginson, Stephen Sewall, Benjamin and William Pickman, George Corwin, William Bowditch, William Pickering, Benjamin, William, John and Samuel Brown, and Richard Derby. These are names of persons by themselves and their descendants very closely connected with the wealth and fame of Salem, then and since. But Philip English seems to have stood at the head of the commercial class in his day in successful enterprise. But in other respects he was inferior, as he lacked the education and high manners of many of his associates. Mrs. English was much superior to him in these respects. She was a Hollingsworth, and had been highly educated, having been a pupil of Madame Piedmonte, a distinguished instructress in Boston. Dr. Bentley says she was "the ornament of the family." It has come down to us that she was haughty and aristocratic, but this may have been only sharing in the lofty manner of the higher class of that time, when distinctions of rank were set up and regarded to a degree of which we can hardly conceive.

And here it is worthy of remark that Salem has had two periods of commercial greatness and renown. First, in the colonial days of Philip English, say from 1650 to 1750 — a hundred years of great prosperity. And again in the sixty years following the Revolution, — a period of even more distinguished prosperity. The first commercial expansion was in the trade with the West Indies, and the second with the East Indies. In both of these, large fortunes were made and noted families established.

Philip English was a zealous Episcopalian, but his wife

was a member of the First Church. He gave the land on St. Peter street upon which the first Episcopal church was built. In 1725, when he was seventy-five years old, and had been a leading merchant for half a century, he was put into Salem jail for refusing to pay taxes to support the East Church, as the law then required.

When the witchcraft madness seized the community, in 1692, Mr. English and his wife were both cried out upon, arrested and imprisoned. It is said that Mrs. English was confined in the second story of a tavern, not far east of the First Church, called "the Cat and Wheel." The populace immediately broke into "English's Great House," as it was called, and literally stole the entire contents — furniture, fixtures and household goods. At the same time the public authorities seized the merchandise in his warehouse at Point of Rocks, valued at £1183. The Englishes were carried to Boston and lodged in the jail there, whence, by connivance of persons in high station, but after nine weeks detention, they escaped to New York, where they remained until the next year.

The winter following the witchcraft proceedings was one of great severity in Salem, and Mr. English returned good for evil by sending on a hundred barrels of flour from New York to relieve the distress of the poor. The next year, 1693, the family returned to Salem and were received with open arms. There were public demonstrations of joy, a bonfire in the evening, and the Rev. Mr. Noyes, of the First Church, who had been active in promoting the witchcraft madness, made an address of welcome. Such was the revulsion of public feeling from the senseless frenzy which prevailed a year before. But Mrs. English returned, to speedily end her days, having contracted consumption in the cold jail. She had the sympathy of her neighbors, and every material aid, but could not be saved. She died in 1694, aged 42 years, a victim of the cruel persecution of 1692. There comes down to us from those distant days the name of no woman so distinguished for abilities and accomplishments as Mary English.

Mr. English lived to the advanced age of 86, enjoying the respect and confidence of the community, and holding

many offices of trust. He died in 1736, and was buried in St. Peter's churchyard.

BECKET STREET.

In the early days Becket's Lane ran from "Lambert's corner in Bow Street to the South River." It ended at a beach, known for years as Becket's Beach. Here was the principal ship-yard of Salem for a long period. Vessels were built at other places, at Winter Island, on the Neck, in the cove at the foot of Elm street, at Sweet's Cove, foot of Creek street, at the Mills on the North River, at Stage Point on the South River, and elsewhere, but it is safe to say that more vessels were built by the Becket's than at any other point.

John Becket was a ship-builder in Salem as early as 1655. Retire Becket, in 1818, launched his last hull, a brig, on nearly the same spot of the original ship-yard. Thus, for more than a century and a half, this single family supplied our merchants with sailing craft which made Salem known as a commercial port throughout the world. To name their employers would be to enumerate the merchants who contributed to our prosperity through five generations, the houses of Crowninshield, Derby, West, Gardner, Silsbee, Stone, Fisk, Thorndike, Nichols and others less known.

Mr. William Leavitt published a list of twenty-five vessels built by Retire Becket alone, between the years 1784 and 1818 — only a fifth part of the business life of the family in Salem. Some of these were distinguished for speed and general excellence, regarded as masterpieces of skillful workmanship, such as the ships Mount Vernon, Active, Hazard, Margaret, America and the brigantines Cleopatra's Barge and the Becket. The Cleopatra's Barge, built for Capt. George Crowninshield, was famous, both in Europe and America, not only for the cost and elegance of her furnishings — a marvel of sumptuousness for those days — but because of her admirable qualities as a boat. She was everywhere acknowledged to be one of the best built vessels in the world. The brigantine Becket, which followed the Barge, was built for John Crowninshield,

and was named by him in honor of her distinguished builder. It is said that the Becket was one of the best specimens of ship-carpentry ever launched from the stocks, here or elsewhere.

How many vessels were built by the Becketts who preceded Retire, during the previous 130 years, will never be known, but the number must have been very large. Most of them, to be sure, were small in dimensions, when compared with the monsters of the deep which now traverse the oceans, but they served the purposes of their owners, and the needs of the times. The largest, built by Retire Becket for George Crowninshield & Sons, was the very celebrated ship *America*, of 473 tons, whose brilliant career in the war of 1812 has been often recounted.

John Becket, the first builder, erected in 1655, the house, then opposite the beach, now known as No. 11 Becket avenue, wherein the family lived until the death of Retire, in 1831. Of course it is one of the oldest houses in the city, a colonial house with overhanging second story and a front porch — one of the few of those relics now extant. A model of it is on exhibition in the Essex Institute.

TURNER STREET.

This highway is one of the most interesting in our ancient town, if its romantic story could be adequately told. It commemorates one of the most distinguished families in Salem's history, but of whose members little remains on record. Four generations of Turners, four Johns in succession, were wealthy merchants, and prominent in our civil, military and mercantile life. Turner's Lane, before Derby street was laid out, ran from "Murray's corner on Bow street to the South River." The family lived in what is now known as the "House of the Seven Gables." It is not clear who built this ancient mansion, but the date of 1662, on an iron fire-back, still in the house, fixes the time of its erection. Soon after that Captain John Turner was living in it.

This house, like so many of that period, was built in parts. Captain John lived in the original part, comprising

two large lower rooms, two chambers corresponding, and finished rooms in the attics. There was a lean-to, but when this was put on is unknown — perhaps in the beginning. The stud is very low, about seven feet, so that most persons can easily touch the ceiling. The second story overhung the first, but has since been built down to a uniform surface, to suit modern taste.

The ferry to Marblehead started at the foot of the lane and in front of the house, and tradition says that Captain John Turner was the first ferrymen — probably the owner, but not the oarsman. The ferry had previously run from "Butts Point," on the Neck, close by the Fibre Works. The channel of the river then ran near the shore at the foot of Turner street, but was afterwards, by the building of Derby wharf, turned far out into the harbor. A public way, twelve feet wide, was between Captain Turner's land and the water. Such a public way was reserved in the earliest grants of land by the town, on the banks of both the North and South rivers, all the way up and down. That little piece of street called "Becket Avenue," in front of the Becket house, is undoubtedly a remaining part of this public way. Other remaining pieces of a corresponding way on the North river may be seen in the streets known as "Smith Street" and "March Street Court." These interesting bits of colonial road carry us back to the very times of Conant, Endecott and Higginson.

Beyond the road in front of Captain Turner's land was a causeway, "for men, carts and beasts," built out over the flats for the accommodation of passengers by the ferry. The fare was 2^d. The office of the ferry was in the front part of "The House of the Seven Gables," where traces of the counter still remain. Here was where the ferrymen got his pay, and where the passengers got their grog to fortify them during the voyage across the harbor. This little front room was also the "little shop" of Hepzibah Pyncheon, of which Hawthorne tells us; with its gingerbread elephants leaning against the window-pane, and its troops of leaden dragoons galloping along the shelves.

Captain John Turner was a representative in the General Court, and had command of a troop in the militia.

He served against the Indians, and against the French, in the expedition to capture Canada. In 1703, as Felt's Annals tell us, "Captain John Turner went to Andover to hunt Indians with his troop." He seems to have been a skillful hunter of this sort of game, for his great-granddaughter used to relate that the family for years preserved some half-a-dozen scalps taken in that raid. It is a pity these memorials of our ancestors were not kept to adorn the shelves of the Institute, or to dangle from the ceiling of "The House of the Seven Gables."

When the first Turner died he left a large property, and his second son inherited a goodly share and continued to occupy the old house. This John acquired the titles of Honorable and Colonel. The latter was his because he commanded the local regiment, and the former because he was one of His Majesty's Council and a great man generally. Colonel John enlarged the homestead by adding a fine, spacious room on the southern end, and a chamber overhead, of the same ample dimensions. He probably altered the whole exterior of the house. He paved a walkway from the front door to the shore road with cobble-stones brought from Baker's Island. Portions of this paving are still there, below the surface. His father, Captain John, had leased Baker's Island in 1678, for 1000 years, and afterwards bought the fee for £130. In the very last years of his life this distinguished gentleman, Colonel John, built an elegant and costly dwelling on Essex street, nearly opposite Central, known in our day as the Mansion House, and used as a hotel. Some parts of it are still preserved in the building occupied by the Almy, Bigelow and Washburn Company. Colonel and Honorable John Turner died in 1742, and was doubtless buried with distinguished honors. He left a child named John, who was Naval officer in Salem just before the Revolution, and who himself left a son John, who was a sea-captain, and commanded the ship Franklin of Salem, 20 guns, during that war.

"The House of the Seven Gables" passed from the Turners to the Ingersoll family, another of the old families of Salem, wealthy and respectable, and engaged in commercial pursuits. The last of this family, Miss Susan

Ingersoll, died a few years since, at an advanced age. In her youth she was celebrated for her beauty and accomplishments, and was a prominent figure in the best society of Salem. She is said to be a character in Hawthorne's romance under the name of Alice Pyncheon.

"A portrait of this young lady," says Hawthorne, "painted by a Venetian artist, and left by her father in England, is said to have fallen into the hands of the Duke of Devonshire and to be now preserved at Chatsworth; not on account of any association with the original, but for its high value as a picture and the high character of beauty in the countenance. If ever there was a lady born and set apart from the world's vulgar mass by a certain gentle and cold stateliness it was this very Alice Pyncheon. Yet there was the womanly mixture in her, the tenderness, or, at least, the tender capabilities." She was familiarly known as the "duchess" by Hawthorne and the other habitués of the old mansion, who were drawn there by her attractive personality. In her day the house had been the scene of many gay parties, and was noted for its hospitality. In 1813, a distinguished party was given here in honor of Captain George Crowninshield and the officers who had brought from Halifax to Salem the bodies of Captain Lawrence and Lieutenant Ludlow, the gallant officers who lost their lives on the frigate Chesapeake in her unfortunate battle with the English frigate Shannon. With the departure of Miss Ingersoll the old house passed into the common-place, and was thenceforth interesting because of its antiquity, its historic celebrity, and the personal memories which cluster about it.

The inventory of the estate of the "Honorable John Turner, Esquire," as the record in the Probate Office styles him, is extraordinary. It is very minute and voluminous, and shows that he owned almost every description of property, and even a superabundance of all articles of necessity or luxury. His silver-plate was valued at £534. His pewter-plate at £65. He left real estate, vessels, lands in other towns, a wharf and two warehouses at foot of Turner's street, one for "molasses" only, and a vast supply of cloths, clothing and household goods. Among other curious items are the following :

Remains of a warehouse brought from Winter Island.

1 negro man named Titus	£85
1 negro woman named Rebecca	95
1 negro man named Lewis	130
58 acres of land at Baker's Island	1526
Half the Town House cellar	60

The whole estate was valued at £10,752-17-8½, an extremely large fortune at that time. 1753481

The homestead of the Turners, which so long distinguished Turner Lane, where the wealth and fashion of the town were wont to congregate, is likely to be preserved longer than any of the ancient and historic edifices, because it has been immortalized by Hawthorne.

It seems to me almost impossible to resist the conclusion, that this interesting habitation is the scene of this marvellous tale of "The House of the Seven Gables," although I am aware that this is disputed. The premises correspond in several details with the author's vivid description. An examination of the roof, on the inside, discloses the outlines of the original gables, and there were seven of them. One of the "spiraeled chimnies" has been taken down, but the other is preserved. Hepzibah's little shop is in front of the house with the door upon the street as described. The remains of the Pyncheon elm are still by the porch, where they should be, and old Maule's well is still in the garden. The numerous pilgrims who visit this shrine, book in hand, are generally impressed with the correspondence of the place and the story, and that, consciously or unconsciously, here is the source of Hawthorne's inspiration. It is true that Hawthorne said that he depicted no particular house, and said in the preface, that "the book may be read strictly as a romance, having a great deal more to do with the clouds overhead, than with any portion of the soil of Essex County." I recall also that, in the preface to the *Scarlet Letter*, he said of Hester Prynne that he found, in a lumber-room of the Salem Custom House, "the records of the sayings and doings of this singular woman for most of which the

¹ Slavery continued in Salem until after the Revolution. It is estimated that at that time there were a hundred slaves in town.

reader is referred to the story entitled 'The Scarlet Letter.' But these statements must not be read too literally. Romancers, as well as poets, are allowed a certain literary license. Hawthorne was the

"Ingenuous dreamer in whose well-told tale
Sweet fiction and sweet truth alike prevail."

When he wrote "The House of the Seven Gables," no such edifice as he so graphically delineated could be found in Salem. He did in fact describe a fashion of dwellings which were built in the long ago, of which, however, the Turner House was one. He had never beholden such a structure, but his mind's eye saw, and enables us also to see, an ideal and picturesque colonial habitation, "The House of the Seven Gables," the Pyncheon House, as it was when the Turners lived in it.

In support of the view here adopted concerning the claims of the Turner house to be considered as "The House of the Seven Gables," I am permitted to use the following letter from the late Horace Ingersoll to Hon. W. D. Northend, now first published.

"Some time in the month of May A. D. 1840, being then in Philadelphia [the writer was then pastor of St. Mark's Episcopal Church], I received a letter from Hawthorne, in which among other things he said, 'The day after the great storm in March, I went with David Roberts, to make a call on "the Duchess,"' (a term which he always used when speaking of his cousin, the late Miss Ingersoll) 'at the old house in Turner Street, to learn how she weathered the gale. I had,' he wrote, 'a more than ordinary pleasant visit, and among other things, in speaking of the old house she said it has had in the history of its changes and alterations, seven gables. The expression was new and struck me very forcibly; I think I shall make something of it. I expressed a wish to go all over the house; she assented and I repaired to the attic, and there was no corner or dark hole I did not peep into. I could readily make out five gables; and on returning to the parlor, I inquired where the two remaining gables were placed; the information I received was that the remaining gables were on the north side, and that when Colonel Turner became the owner of the house he

removed the "lean-to" on which were the missing gables, and made amends by placing three gables on the L or addition which he made on the south side of the house; the mark of beams still remains in the studding to show precisely where they were. On my return, after the exploration I had made of the old structure, the "Duchess" said to me, "why don't you write something?" 'I have no subject to write about.' "Oh, there are subjects enough; write about that old chair," pointing to a high backed old chair in the room, "it is an old Puritan relic, and you can make a biographical sketch of each old Puritan who became in succession the owner of the chair." It was a good suggestion and I have made use of it under the name of "Grandfather's Chair." It will be a child's book, and I have nearly completed it as you may see when you come from Philadelphia.'

"I came from Philadelphia in June, 1840, and before leaving Boston for Salem, I made a visit to Hawthorne at his room in the house of George S. Hillard, on Pinckney street. Hawthorne was 'at home' and on the table in the centre of the room lay the manuscript of 'Grandfather's Chair' finished and ready for the printer. It was a habit with Hawthorne, after he had finished or published a work, or story, to leave it to its fate, and think no more about it, and it was so in this case; his whole talk was now about 'The House of the Seven Gables.' 'It was just what I wanted and I shall,' he said, 'make something of it that I believe will be interesting and effective.' What he meant by the last word I never could learn, although I often alluded to it. I once inquired if he was thinking of higher prices for his works. I obtained an answer something like this, — if I should write, as I intend to, a story with this title, I mean to have what I think is its full value.

"Having heard Hawthorne express his feeling and pleasure at having obtained a subject for 'stray thoughts,' as was one of his expressions in his delight over what promised to be a fruitful theme, I made my way home, and there learned from the 'Duchess,' her recollections of the matter. She said he seemed perfectly infatuated with the words of her remarks 'House of the Seven Gables.' She spoke of his saying 'It is just what I wanted.' 'I think

from his manner and words,' she said, 'that he has a story, perhaps a novel in preparation which he wishes to publish, and in which he does not wish the name of the story shall convey any information, as to the incidents and catastrophe of the romance.'

"In my conversation with Mr. Dàvid Roberts, he repeated precisely the same account of the visit of himself and Hawthorne to the house on Turner street, as I had heard from Hawthorne, and his cousin, 'the Duchess,' as he always called her; with this little supplement by Mr. Roberts; he says 'on leaving the house, we,' that is, Hawthorne and himself, 'had gone about half way up Turner street, when Hawthorne suddenly stopped, saying, "I must make a note of that or I may forget it," and taking from his vest pocket a very small memorandum book, he wrote, "Seven Gables or House of Seven Gables," saying at the same time, "I would not have missed this visit to the Duchess for anything. She has started a host of new ideas, and I am going right to work on some of them." The story of 'Grandfather's Chair' was the immediate result and 'The House of the Seven Gables' followed some ten years afterwards, in 1850, but it was written while he occupied the house in Mall street. It was written at odd times, when he felt in the vein, as he called it. This and the 'Scarlet Letter' were written, both, in Mall street, during the years 1846-7 and 8. The preface to the 'Scarlet Letter' was written after leaving the Salem Custom House, about 1849 or 50.

"In the story of 'The House of the Seven Gables,' Hawthorne alludes to a large tree. There was at that time, in 1840, one of the largest elm trees in Salem, at the west end of the garden. It has been cut down to make room for a dwelling house. All the other trees around the house have been planted there by me since 1843. It was a most cheerless looking place before these trees relieved the barren waste around the house.

"The original house was intended for a ferry house; a ferry having been established between Marblehead and Salem, and singular enough Richard Ingersoll was appointed ferryman. Richard Ingersoll subsequently removed to Beverly. The will of the wife of Richard Ingersoll, written by Governor Endecott, is among the

Records of Probate Court. In this will Richard Ingersoll leaves his best feather bed to his wife, I suppose to console her in her affliction and widowhood, but the widow found other sources of consolation for she soon after married a man named Haynes, and both removed to Hartford, Conn. Richard Ingersoll came from Bedfordshire, Eng., in 1630, and died about 1642. The old ferry house must have been a different building from the present 'House of the Seven Gables,' as the present house was built in 1662, twenty years after the death of the first appointed ferryman, Richard Ingersoll. About 1780, a descendant of Richard Ingersoll, Captain Samuel Ingersoll, became the owner, buying the estate from the heirs of Colonel John Turner.

"The old house, No. 34 Turner street, has now been fully ventilated, and in all its history and mutations, extending back in the dim and misty past to the year 1662, a period of two hundred and thirty years, lacking a few months, and through all this long and dreary time, not one solitary document, writing or tradition connecting the old house with poetry or romance, tale or story can be found. Even through all that scene of human depravity and iniquity, called the delusion of the Salem Witchcraft, the old house stood alone, safe in its obscurity. Among the different and successive owners, was Colonel John Turner. This owner made havoc of the old house. He took down the northern part whereon were two gables, but he made compensation by erecting an addition to the house on the southern side on which he located three gables.

"When I was a small boy, 'the story ran,' that Colonel Turner built the southern L or addition, to celebrate the nuptial feast of the marriage of his son with Miss Mary Kitchen, the belle of the village. This wedding seems to come nearest of anything to the poetry or romance, that is found in the annals of 'The House of the Seven Gables.' "

This interesting letter seems to make quite clear the real connection of the Turner house with the title of Hawthorne's story.

I here conclude. There are other streets which might interest the students of our local history, notably, Broad, Chestnut, St. Peter and Bridge streets, but they do not come within the limits of the present paper.

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